

Showcasing Earth Team Volunteers and Activities in Missouri

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Earth Team Corner



State Coordinator's Corner by Mary Giles

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Mary Giles, State Earth Team Coordinator

I waited with mild annoyance and listened for my name over the loud speaker. I was spending a Saturday morning doing something I dislike – waiting! It was time for my car's oil change and tune-up. When I heard my name called I walked over to give my keys to the mechanic. "It will be about a two hour wait," he said. I was not surprised and resolved myself to make the best of it.

I don't know why waiting bothers me so much, but it does. Even if I plan ahead and take something along to keep myself entertained, I still know I am waiting....and it feels like I am wasting time.

Time is valuable. There are so many things to do, places to go, people to see, organizations to support. A big chunk of my week, like yours, is at work, so I constantly need to prioritize the things I'd like to do during my free time. Waiting is at the bottom of my list!

Volunteers have the same challenges. If they are still in school, the free time they have to spend in volunteer service is limited. Even if retired or unemployed, most people have responsibilities that limit their ability to do all they'd like to do. So if a volunteer chooses to assist us with our work, we should feel honored and make the best use of the gift of time they are giving us. Their time is a valuable commodity too!

The goal in every office should be to provide a variety

of service opportunities that have broad appeal and varying time commitments. Many people will consider a one-time or short-term project when they could not possibly commit to anything longer term.

A great one-time project for this time of year is gleaning. Getting food that would be going to waste into the hands of folks who really need it appeals to most people. Gleaning events are usually conducted as a large group so there is also social appeal for many. Why not consider joining efforts with a gleaning organization or talking with a farmer and organizing a gleaning event for your volunteers? Talk with your employees too. Some may even want to take annual or credit leave from work and join in the effort!

Waiting often involves something you *need* to do, *want* to do, or *can't control*, or you wouldn't be waiting. So relax, and remind yourself of that when you settle in for your next two-hour wait.



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Keep this information



A Message from the Missouri State Conservationist JR Flores

Earth Team Update



JR Flores, Missouri State Conservationist

"Keep up the good work and finish strong!"

*JR Flores
State Conservationist*

Greetings Conservationists!

I am very pleased with the third quarter Earth Team report which reflects the contribution of volunteers throughout Missouri. The number of volunteers assisting with conservation activities has doubled over the same period last year, and the number of service hours they have provided has nearly doubled. This is a significant accomplishment!

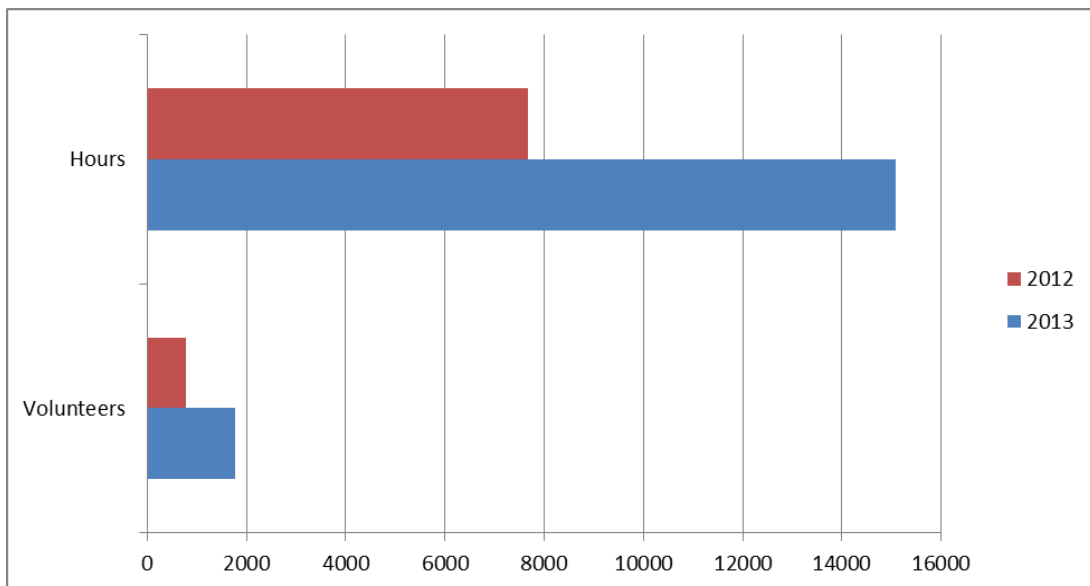
Missouri met both our annual goals of having all offices participate in the Earth Team program and conduct needs assessments by the June 30 deadline. These goals indicate a real team effort by NRCS employees and partners to integrate volunteers in service to the public. The needs assessments are proving very beneficial in helping identify specific tasks volunteers can complete. Please use this information when recruiting and placing volunteers in service positions in your offices this summer.

Missouri is participating in the Feds Feeds Families/ People's Garden Initiative Gleaning effort this year. When making field visits, be cognizant of potential gleaning opportunities. If you become aware of a situation where food is going to go to waste, consider organizing a gleaning effort utilizing volunteers and report it as a gleaning event. Many pounds of food are discarded each year because it is not of ideal size or shape. Let's help get this food to people who need it!

I am impressed with the creative ways volunteers have provided service this fiscal year and would like these volunteers, and the employees who supervised them, to be recognized for their effort. Every August, Earth Team award nominations are submitted for area, state, and national competition. I would like to see several award nominations submitted for competition from each area and the state office this year. The deadline to submit award nominations to area coordinators is August 30. If you would like more information about the Earth Team award program, see the article on the last page of this newsletter or contact your Area Earth Team Coordinator.

Currently, Missouri ranks second in the nation in the number of volunteers who have contributed service through our offices and in the number of hours of volunteer service. I ask you to keep up the good work and finish strong!

Earth Team Volunteers and Volunteer Hours Comparison FY 2012 – FY 2013





State Office/PMC

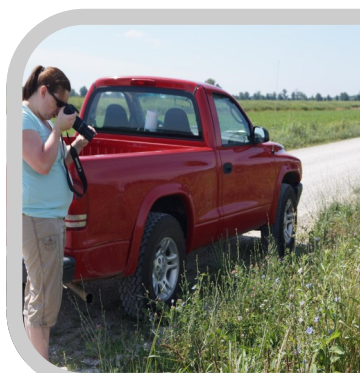
Volunteers Assist with Butterfly Count

Eight Earth Team volunteers participated in the second annual North American Butterfly Association (NABA) butterfly county July 13 at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center. Volunteers spent three hours tracking butterflies and counted 82 in an area that straddled the Mississippi River and included parts of Illinois. Butterfly tallies were sent to NABA for inclusion with numbers from across the nation.

The count program promotes interest in butterflies and provides for scientific monitoring. Comparisons of the results through the years show changes in butterfly populations and can reveal the effects of weather and habitat on the different butterfly species.



(L-R): Allen Casey (NRCS), Kathy Brady, Heather Bogosian, Deb Speidel, and David Speidel (NRCS) Not pictured: Ron Cordsiemon (NRCS), Jo Ann Cordsiemon and Ronnie Cordsiemon.



Heather Bogosian photographs a butterfly during the butterfly count at the Elsberry PMC

Area 1

Jackson County Volunteer Teaches Lessons About Soil

Conservation education is a significant service the Jackson County SWCD staff provides to both children and adults. Teaching third and fourth graders about the relationship and value of soil and food is a formidable task for Linda Struwe, Program Specialist II and Dave Fry, District Technician II. With an audience of 2500 students annually, it is an ongoing movement that takes more than one to get the job done.

Linda estimates it takes about 30% of their time. She and Dave perform education outreach in Jackson County, located in the Kansas City area. "We could not do it without the help from our Earth Team volunteers", states Linda. When we go out to schools, we usually set up four stations of various hands-on activities. The kids stay at each station for about 15



Sue Ann Wright teaching a soil activity in Independence.

minutes before they move to the next station. We need two volunteers to help us with a set up like that."

They have a list of about eleven volunteers that help them from time to time. Sue Ann Wright is one of those

volunteers. Sue Ann has a passion for teaching people about why soil is so important. In this photo she is captured performing the apple activity for students at Randall Elementary School located at Independence, Missouri.

Area 2

Volunteer Assists Forester in Boone County

The Boone County NRCS office was fortunate to have Kaitlyn Bradley as an Earth Team Volunteer during the winter and early spring of 2013. Kaitlyn was able to volunteer one afternoon a week as she finished her BS degree in Forestry at the University of Missouri – School of Natural Resources. Kaitlyn spent most of her volunteer time in the field with NRCS Forester Joe Alley. This included assessing the success of CRP tree plantings, inspecting completed woodland prescribed burns, marking trees for removal in an EQIP project, as well as a few hours of office work. Alley commented, “It has been great having Kaitlyn on these jobs. She hit the ground running and made my work more efficient and now she has some valuable training under her belt as a result.”

Kaitlyn became aware of the Earth Team program during her fall semester at MU. As the

School of Natural Resources (SNR) Student Council President and member of the Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, she had contacted Joe to request that he represent NRCS at a Government Career Panel Q&A Night for the SNR students. Joe mentioned Earth Team during his presentation and the rest is history.



Forestry volunteer, Kaitlyn Bradley

Kaitlyn graduated with honors from MU in May. She lives in Columbia and hopes to fit in a few more volunteer hours this summer so that she can assist with designing and laying out erosion control

structures. All of this experience will be very helpful when she starts her professional career this fall – with the Peace Corps in Paraguay! Way to go Kaitlyn!

Area 3

Group is Behind Increase in Volunteer Hours

Area 3 has increased the number of Earth Team Volunteer hours by leaps and bounds this fiscal year with the inclusion of groups in each field office being a main priority.

A group of individuals have assisted in seven different counties and are credited with the majority of Earth Team Volunteer hours.

The Little River Drainage District groups have three women that volunteer their time to assist NRCS with completing paperwork, making sure all the documents for the 2011 Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) are correct and done in a timely matter.

Stephanie Hosey, Laura Naramore and Belinda Welker have 3528 Earth Team Volunteer hours combined with an average of 1176 hours each since October 1, 2012.

The drainage works in The Little River Drainage District were heavily damaged by flooding in 2011.

The assistance we’ve received from NRCS and the

Emergency Watershed Program has been critical to our recovery, which in turn has prompted us to volunteer our services in assisting NRCS to help bring our drainage district back to its original purpose,” states Belinda Welker.



(L-R) Kim Overton, Area 3 Earth Team Coordinator, and volunteers Laura Naramore, Belinda Welker and Stephanie Hosey.

“Without flood control and drainage, nothing else matters.”

*Dustin Boatwright
Assistant Chief
Engineer
The Little River
Drainage District*



Area 4

Volunteers Assists with Education Activities

For **CHILDREN** — Ozark County 4th Grade Field Day



Volunteer George Sims teaches children about macro-invertebrates during the 4th grade field day, April 5th, in Zanoni.

The Ozark County SWCD held the annual 4th grade field day for all Ozark County 4th grades which featured hands-on learning activities such as the food chain, fishing, wildlife, forestry, soils, and plants at 10 different stations. Students from Bakersfield, Dora, Gainesville, Lutie and Thornfield attended. Participating partners were NRCS, MDC, MU Extension, and Earth Team volunteers. This was the fourth year for the event which was a great day for fun and learning for the children.

For **ADULTS** — Webster County Electric Fence Workshop



Friend of Conservation volunteer, Tom Spriggs, addresses a crowd of landowners at the electric fence workshop on June 13.

This year the Webster County NRCS and SWCD hosted an annual Electric Fencing Demonstration on Tom Spriggs' property near Marshfield. The annual event location is rotated each year to make it more available to all county landowners. With electric fencing playing such a key role in the implementation of rotational grazing systems, landowners are always interested in learning the best methods and in discovering the newest equipment to help them install their individual systems.

"We have some great partners in Ozark County. They are always ready to jump in and help!"

Melisa Myers
SWCD Tech II

Do You Know The Answers to These Questions?



1. When thinking about recruiting volunteers or establishing job descriptions for them, what are the **four questions** you should ask?
2. What is the value of a volunteer's time?
3. What is the national volunteer showcase and where is it?

1. Ask yourself these questions.....
- Is the volunteer 14 years old?
- Is the activity one that an NRCS employee would perform?
- Is the activity beyond those the individual is paid or elected to do?
- Is this an activity your State Conservationist would approve?
2. A volunteer's time is valued at \$22.14/hr
3. The Volunteer Showcase is intended for an external audience and can be found on the National Earth Team's webpage.



Last year through garden harvest and gleaning efforts more than 1.9 million pounds of fresh produce was donated to those in need.

Share Your Harvest - - - Through **GLEANING!**

The People's Garden Share Your Harvest Effort directly supports the Feds Feed Families Food Drive.

You can participate by:

- designating your People's Garden as a donation site where community members can bring produce from their own gardens
- starting a gleaning project – collecting left over crops to donate - with a local farmer

During the summer months, children are particularly vulnerable because the support system they depend on through schools is not available. USDA's Summer Food Service Program helps fill that gap, but it can't reach everyone who is hungry. Our efforts will help millions of Americans across the country that turn to food banks and food pantries for emergency food assistance over the summer. Food banks have reported record numbers of families, children, individuals, and first-time visitors seeking food assistance. This food drive comes at a critical time when donations are tapering off and will help nourish those struggling with hunger in communities across the country.

This year, USDA is leading the Feds Feed Families effort in collaboration with managers from agencies across the government. The 2013 food drive officially began on June 1 and will run through August 28.

How to Report Your Produce

All produce should be reported in the People's Garden database at www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden (log into the database in the "Join Us" section of the website) this includes produce from gardens and produce from gleaning efforts. The amount in the database will be used to report all produce for the Feds Feed Families Food Drive.

EXISTING Gardens and Gleaning Projects

If your garden or gleaning project is already in the database, simply log in to the database and click [Update my Garden](#) or [Update Gleaning](#) in the menu on the upper left.

Open the [Share Your Harvest](#) section and click [update](#)

Enter the total number of pounds donated* in the [box labeled 2013](#) and hit [submit](#). Your record will be updated automatically and you will return to the same screen. At this time you may make other edits to your partner organizations or go to other sections of the database listed in the menu on the upper left.

If you do not have any other changes click [Quit](#) on the menu bar.

*The total number of pounds is the cumulative amount. When you update the information please add the new amount to the existing amount. For example, if you entered 50 pounds the first week and then have an additional 40 pounds the next week, please update the total to 90 pounds.

NEW Gardens and Gleaning Projects

If your garden or gleaning project is not in the database, please enter it so we can count your efforts. To enter a new garden or gleaning project go to www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden (log into the database in the "Join Us" section of the website).

Click [I Agree](#) and enter your eAuthentication credentials.

Select [Add a New Garden](#) from the menu in the upper left.

If you are entering a garden you will be asked to self certify that it meets the criteria to be a People's Garden: 1) it is a collaborative effort, 2) it benefits the community, and 3) it demonstrates sustainable practices. If yes, [click Add a New Peoples Garden](#).

If you are entering a Gleaning Project go to the bottom of the page and [click Add a New Gleaning Project](#).

Enter the information requested to register your garden or project.

Once your garden or project is in the database, follow the instructions above for existing projects.

Please submit all of the requested information in the database so we can recognize our partners.

Share Your Harvest reports are printed monthly so please update your donation amount by the end of each month.



Each area will judge all nominations that are submitted at the area level and then submit one winning nomination per award category for state competition. State winners will go forward to national competition.

NATIONAL EARTH TEAM AWARDS

Each state may submit one nomination per award category. No unsolicited material should accompany the nominations (e.g. photos, news articles, etc.).

National Earth Team Individual Volunteer Awards - (NRCS-PER-036) This award recognizes one outstanding volunteer in each region. The winners receive an award and certificate.

National Earth Team Group Volunteer Awards - (NRCS-PER-036) This award recognizes one outstanding volunteer group in each region. The winners receive an award and certificate.

National Volunteer Service Award - Chief's Cup - (NRCS-PER-037) This award is presented by the chief to the State that most creatively uses volunteers to meet the mission of NRCS. A crystal cup and certificate are presented to the state conservationist.

National Chief's Field Awards - (NRCS-PER-037) This award recognizes one office located at the field level in each region. Nominees describe how the office utilized volunteer resources and explain the accomplishments of the office due to the assistance of volunteers. The winners receive an award and certificate.

National NACD/NRCS Earth Team Award - (NRCS-PER-039) This award is presented to the most effective Earth Team in a conservation district which demonstrates shared leadership among district officials, NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers. An award for the district office and a certificate of appreciation is presented.

National Partnership Earth Team Award - (NRCS-PER-039) This award recognizes one outstanding partnership nationally. The award is presented to the most effective Earth Team that demonstrates shared leadership among the partnering organization, NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers. The winner will receive an award item and certificate.

NRCS Employee National Earth Team Awards - (NRCS-PER-038) This award recognizes one NRCS employee in each region. The winners receive an award and certificate.

National Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Awards - (NRCS-PER-038) This award recognizes one outstanding area or state volunteer coordinator in each region. The winners receive an award and certificate.

Award Forms are Located on the MO Sharepoint under Management/Earth Team then NRCS-PER 36, NRCS-PER 37, NRCS-PER 38, NRCS-PER 39

AWARDS SCHEDULE

- **AUGUST 30** Deadline for nominations to Area Coordinators
- **SEPTEMBER 13** Deadline for winning area nominations to the State Earth Team Coordinator
- **OCTOBER 11** Review by Nominations Judging Committee complete
- **OCTOBER 15** Winning nominations to the State Conservationist for approval
- **OCTOBER 25** State Earth Team Coordinator will submit winning nominations to the national Earth Team office for national competition

An announcement will be made of state winning nominations that were selected to go forward for national competition.

The national office will announce national winners in all categories.